

Be Faithful and Attentive* — Book One

Chapter 2 (in part):

Necessary Dispositions and Virtues

"Human life is [like a] dark room. When the light of truth enters a soul, it dispels the darkness — it makes her distinguish what is true from what is false, the temporal from the eternal, in such a way that she casts vices away from herself and places within the order of virtues."

(Vol. 2:

August 18, 1899)

1. The Necessity of Practicing the Lesser Forms of Holiness

Dear Child of the Divine Will, in the previous chapter you learned that to live in the Divine Will you must be constantly **attentive** to maintaining the divine attitude of doing everything for and in Jesus. You also learned that **peace** is a sign that you are keeping this divine attitude. Finally, you learned that these two dispositions of **attentiveness** and **peace** are indispensable, since the Divine Will "unfolds its Acts according to the dispositions that are shown It" (Vol. 20: Mar. 13, 1927). Let us therefore look further at these two dispositions beginning with the second:

Peace

Interior peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this fruit will be produced in your soul when you are both **obedient** to the Will of God, and are completely **abandoned** to It. And this is why peace is a sign to know if you are living in the Divine Will. In a truly peaceful soul, nothing that happens exteriorly or even interiorly can touch or disturb her, for deep in her interior she rests in the peace of God. Jesus says:

You must know that when there is a strong storm at sea, the depth of the sea is in perfect calm. Where the water is deep, the storm doesn't disturb the surface as much; the waters stay calm. Thus the fish, when they feel a storm — to be more secure — go to huddle where the water is deeper. Consequently the storm discharges itself completely where the sea contains very little water. Since the waters are shallow, the storm has the strength to shake the fish from top to bottom — and carry them elsewhere, to other parts of the sea.

This is the way it happens with souls. When they are completely filled with God — up to the brim, up to overflowing — the storms don't have the force to shake them in the least. Since there is no force comparable to God, these souls will feel great peace.

Therefore, feeling a storm, the soul puts the virtues in order, and curls itself up in the depths of God. Thus on the outside it senses there is a storm, but all is obscured. Then the soul enjoys greater peace and rests calmly in the bosom of God — like the fish in the bosom of the sea (Vol. 8: March 15, 1908).

The virtues which need to be put "in order" to maintain this interior peace in the trials and storms of life are as previously stated, **obedience** and **abandonment (resignation)**. But, to practice these two virtues, you also need **humility, trust (confidence) in God, mortification** and **detachment**.

Attentiveness

Constant attentiveness can only be maintained by acquiring habitual **interior recollection (continual prayer)** — an awareness of God within the soul. Prior to acquiring this habit, your attentiveness will be at intervals. With your attentiveness, you must constantly be examining yourself to be sure your intention is pure (doing everything for Jesus), and that you are giving up your own ways and your own attitude to take those of Jesus (doing everything in Jesus). Therefore, besides acquiring habitual **interior recollection**, the virtues necessary for living this attentiveness are **self-knowledge (humility), purity of intention, mortification** and **detachment**.

Finally, to acquire any and all of these virtues, correspondence to grace and perseverance (constancy / steadfastness) are also needed.

So the need to practice the virtues is clear. In fact, in the thirty-six volume Book of Heaven, the first ten volumes are devoted primarily to the virtues and to practicing the former or "lesser forms of holiness." In these volumes, Jesus — often using the traditional terminology of our spiritual writers — teaches the ways of sanctity previously established in the Church. He explains the need for this in this way:

◇ It is necessary...to first understand the good of Redemption in order to dispose oneself to understand the good of the 'Fiat Voluntas Tua', as in Heaven so on earth.

This [inability to comprehend] would have happened to you also if, in the beginning when I began to speak to you, I would have spoken about my Will. You would not have understood Me. I would have been like a teacher, who would have wanted to teach his disciples the sciences and foreign languages instead of first teaching them the letters of the alphabet.... Poor girl! You would have been confounded and would never have learned anything. I wanted instead to speak to you of suffering, of virtue, of things more adapted and palpable to human nature, and of things that can be called the alphabet of Christian life and the language of exile for those that aspire to the Celestial Fatherland. On the other hand, my Will is the language of Heaven and begins where the other sciences and virtues end (Vol. 16: November 15, 1923).

[4] All true sanctity must be understood as consisting of something both "human" and "divine," for all true holiness is intimately connected with Jesus Christ the Incarnate Word. Nevertheless, Jesus has explained: All the acts of his Humanity, both internal and external are contained in his Will. Since his external acts have been more or less known, creatures have been able, "with their human will" aided by grace, to participate in them. Thus He calls this holiness of the Saints, a "human" sanctity. On the contrary, little has been known of the internal acts done by his Humanity in the Divine Will. Therefore until now creatures have not been able to participate in them. Now, however, with this new knowledge, Jesus says He wants creatures "to replicate what my Humanity did in the Divine Will. I want your will united with mine so that it can repeat what I did and continue doing" (Vol. 14: Oct. 19, 1922). He therefore calls this new holiness a "divine" sanctity. (See also Vol. 12: Feb. 13, 1919).

[5] Royo, Antonio, O.P. & Aumann, Jordan, O.P., The Theology of Christian Perfection, p. 62. Dubuque, IA: The Priory Press, 1962.

[6] both one and the other are the virtue of obedience: Jesus speaks here of the two types of obedience: one which concerns obedience to superiors who represent Our Lord, and the other which concerns obedience to God through his Commandments, the Gospel teachings and his inspirations.

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◇ Now to live in my Volition is not only salvation, but also holiness that must be exalted over all other forms of holiness, which must bear the imprint of the Holiness of its Creator. So, **one must first practice the lesser forms of holiness**, which are like a retinue, forerunners, messengers and preparations for this Holiness that is completely Divine (Vol. 13: December 3, 1921 — Emphasis added).

Divine Will versus the Virtues

Often in passages in the Book of Heaven Jesus (or Luisa) contrasts living in the Divine Will with the virtues. [1] This must never lead you to think that practicing the virtues is opposed to living in the Divine Will. For as Saint (Fr.) Annibale di Francia — who was Luisa's extraordinary confessor for seventeen years [2] — stated in a letter to her: "With this new Science, in order to form Saints who surpass the ones of the past, it is important that the new Saints possess all the virtues to a heroic degree, just as did the Saints of old..." [3] Therefore, what Jesus wants to say in these passages is that:

(1) To practice the virtues without conforming to God's Will, but making the sheer acquisition of virtue your only goal, does not produce true holiness. Jesus tells us that the problem with practicing the virtues in this manner is that they are not "excluded from human ends, from self-esteem, from self-glory, love of appearing and of pleasing persons" (Vol. 19: April 9, 1926). Therefore, if there appears to be some sanctity, it is a false sanctity, because one only desires holiness to satisfy one's own ego (See Vol. 12: Aug. 14, 1917).

(2) Even those who practice the virtues while conforming their wills to God's (as the Saints did) "feel the weight of their own will, which causes resistance and, even though they faithfully execute the orders of my Will, they feel the weight of their rebellious nature, their passions and inclinations." Yes, even the "Saints, in spite of having reached the highest perfection, feel this will of theirs that goes to war with them, that keeps them oppressed. They are obliged to cry: 'Who will free me from this body of death, from the will that wants to destroy the good that I wish to do?'" (Vol. 17: Sept. 18, 1924). And, Jesus says, this type of holiness will "form at most a human sanctity" (Vol. 19: April 9, 1926).

On the other hand, the sanctity of living in the Divine Will consists of a "Holiness that is completely Divine." [4] In fact, Jesus says: "...there is nothing even remotely resembling the sanctity of living in my Will. All other sanctities will be as small lights, but this new sanctity will be a great sun transfused into its Creator" (Vol. 14: Jul. 10, 1922). Yes, you must still practice the virtues (indeed to a heroic degree to fully possess the Divine Will); yet, as Jesus says, the wonder of this sanctity is that "living in my Volition is to make my Will one's own." Though your human will is never destroyed, it becomes as though it were dead. Therefore it can be said that living in the Divine Will "is to live with one single Will, which is God's alone. And

because there is only one Volition which is all holy, all pure, and all peace; and because there is but one Volition that reigns, there is no resistance; everything is peace" (Vol. 17: Sept. 18, 1924).

Having seen that practicing the virtues is just as important as in the past, you need not be downcast, dear soul, if at this point you possess little virtue. Jesus — whose **Heart burns with incomprehensible Divine desire** to give you the Gift of his Will — is ready to take you where you are! You do not need to be at any particular level of sanctity to begin. As long as you are in a state of grace, all you need do is call the Divine Will into your acts (in the manner discussed especially in Chapter 1 and Chapter 6), and they become divine acts that enrapture God. Then as you grow in the virtues, you will increase your ability to remain constant in the Divine Will, "to make your flights in the Divine Will continuous" (Vol. 20 & Others: Sept. 7, 1931). Dying more and more to your own will, your life will disappear, while Jesus forms the Life of his Divine Will in its place.

Your Acts in the Divine Will Come to Your Aid

Then, most wonderful of all, as this Life of the Divine Will is formed in you, it will be Jesus Himself practicing his Divine virtues in you. He says: "She who does my Will obliges Me to give her my virtues, my beauty, my strength — in a word, everything that I am. And were I not to give them to her, I would deny Myself" (Vol. 11: Dec. 20, 1912). Yes! As you multiply and increase in number your acts in the Divine Will, these very acts — which contain the Life of Jesus — will come to your aid to give you greater strength and constancy in practicing the virtues. The following passage, in which Luisa found herself in a mystical cloud of light, beautifully illustrates this:

...do you know what this cloud of light is? It is my Will operating in you and the acts you have done in It. The more acts you do in It, the greater this cloud of light becomes...

...this cloud of light is marvelously useful to you. It provides light for all your being; it encircles you and renders you a stranger to the earth. It does not permit any pleasure in persons or attachments to enter you, even innocent ones. It puts in you a sweet enchantment for your eyes to see things according to the truth as your Jesus sees them. If it sees you weak, this cloud will embrace you and give you strength. If it sees you inactive, it enters you and enables you to act. Moreover, being extremely jealous of its light, it is the sentinel so that you do nothing without it; and it does nothing without you. ... Let my Will be done in you and may you not concede any act of life to your will that is not in Me, that is, if you want that I fulfill in you my great designs (Vol. 17: April 9, 1925).

And once when Luisa was fearful of not persevering in her life in the Divine Will, Jesus reassured her saying:

1. Perfect uniformity to my Will, because you can never love Me perfectly unless you love Me with my own Will; or rather I say to you: that in loving Me with my own Will you will arrive at loving Me and your neighbor with my own Love.

2. Profound humility, by placing yourself before Me and creatures as last of all.

3. Purity in everything, for whatever slight neglect of purity is committed, be it either in love or in work, this reflects throughout the entire heart, soul and body, and by this means she is left filthy. I therefore want purity to be the dew, which rests on the flowers of sunrise, and, whilst reflecting its rays, transforms those tiny little drops into such manifold precious pearls as to ravish the people. Likewise with all works, thoughts and words, heartbeats and affections, desires and inclinations; if they are adorned with the celestial dew of purity they will weave a sweet enchantment, not only to the human eye but also to the entire Empire.

4. Obedience must be connected with my Will, for if this virtue regards superiors, whom I have provided you with on earth, my Will is then that obedience which regards Me directly, such that one can say that both one and the other are the virtue of obedience[6] with this one difference, that one regards God whereas the other regards men; both have the same value, and there cannot exist the one without the other, wherefore equally must you love both (Vol. 4: November 20, 1900).

[Though we have not included it here at this time, Chapter Two continues on (at length) from this point to give an explanation of each of these ten virtues, adding to these explanations many quotations from the Book of Heaven.]

†
...every scribe instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven is like to a man that is a
householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old.
(Mt. 13:52)

[illegible]
$$\vdots \quad \dots \quad \vdots \quad \dots \quad \vdots$$

Be faithful and attentive as if everything depended on you.

Be completely abandoned and at peace as if everything depended on God.

END NOTES

[1] See: Vol. 12: Aug. 14, 1917 / Vol. 11: Nov. 25, 1912 / Vol. 13: Sept. 28, 1921 / Vol. 16: Dec. 6, 1923 / Vol. 17: Sept. 18, 1924 / Vol. 19: Apr. 9, 1926.

[2] St. Annibale di Francia was also appointed by Luisa's bishop as censor of her writings. The first 19 Volumes, which were published in 1926, contain his Nihil Obstat.

[3] Collection of Letters Sent by Blessed Father Annibale de Francia to The Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta, p. 9, Jacksonville, FL: The Center for the Divine Will, 1997.

ix. Correspondence to Grace

x. Perseverance (Constancy / Steadfastness)

The first four can be considered the foundational virtues for living in the Divine Will. The final six are just as necessary, and are helpers in practicing the first four. Jesus elaborates beautifully on the four foundational virtues in the following two passages:

1) The Passport of Beatitude

The passport to enter into the beatitude that the soul can possess upon this earth must be signed with three signatures and these are resignation, humility and obedience. The perfect resignation to my Will is wax which liquefies our wills and forms of them one alone. It is sugar and honey. But for every resistance to my Will, the wax diminishes, the sugar becomes bitter, and the honey is converted into poison. Now, it is not sufficient to be resigned but the soul must be convinced as well that the greatest good for herself and the best way to glorify Me is to always do my Will. Behold, the necessity of the virtue of humility. For humility produces this knowledge.

But who ennobles these two virtues, who fortifies them, who makes them perseverant, who binds them together so as to not be able to separate, who crowns them? Obedience! Ah, yes, obedience, destroying self-will completely and all that is material, spiritualizes everything; and as a crown, is placed upon the creature.

Wherefore, resignation and humility without obedience, will be subject to instability. But with obedience they will be fixed and stable. Behold, the strict necessity of the signature of obedience, in order that this passport might be valid to pass into the kingdom of spiritual blessedness that the soul can enjoy here below.

Without these three signatures the passport will be worthless; and the soul will always be rejected by the kingdom of blessedness and will be constrained to remain in the kingdom of restlessness, of fears and of dangers. And to its own disgrace it will have for god, its own ego; and this ego will be courted by pride and by rebellion (Vol. 3: April 16, 1900).

2) Recipe for Living in the Divine Will

My delight, if you are to live in my Heart it will suit you to begin leading a more perfect way of life. I therefore desire from you:

...O, if you knew what it signifies to do a good act! For each act, there is a protection which the soul acquires, there is a voice speaking before our Divine Throne. And, as the acts increase, so increase the defenders before God; they increase her strength in order not to vacillate before danger.

When the creature has at her disposition a sequence of acts operated in our Will, O, then each act possessing a Divine Will, a divine strength, has in its favor a divine power which defends her. In each of her acts there is involved our Will; thus, We make Ourselves defenders and sustainers of those that have given life in their acts to our Divine Fiat. Could We perhaps deny anything to Ourselves, or not recognize our Will operating in the creature? No! Therefore, do not fear, but rather abandon yourself as a little newborn in our arms, so that you might feel our sustenance and the protection of your very own acts. Do you believe a continuously repeated good would be a nothing? They are divine properties which are acquired; they are armies which are formed, which secure the Heavenly Fatherland. Whoever has continued in doing so many good acts is similar to one who has acquired much property; if he has a setback, this will not bring him so much harm, because the many properties fill the void produced. On the other hand, for one who has acquired little, or has nothing, it is sufficient for only a little setback to cast him out of house and home and into the most squalid misery. Such is doing much good or little or nothing. Therefore, I always repeat to you: "be attentive; be faithful to Me; and let your flight in my Will be continuous" (Vol. 20 & Others: September 7, 1931).

Therefore, as you study and strive to practice the virtues, always be mindful that **while the practice of the virtues helps you to live in the Divine Will, so also, multiplying your acts in the Divine Will helps you to practice the virtues.**

Having seen in this section the need to "first understand the good of Redemption" and to "practice the lesser forms of holiness," — which means understanding and practicing the Christian virtues — the next section is presented to help you understand in particular, each virtue. The virtues presented are those that are needed to maintain the dispositions necessary for living in the Divine Will.

2. The Virtues in Particular (with excerpts from the Book of Heaven)

The Three Theological Virtues

Before elaborating on the particular virtues required to maintain the divine attitude, and thus live in the Divine Will, it is important to understand that, as with all Christian spirituality, there is a fundamental necessity for the three theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity. In the Book of Heaven Jesus explains this necessity by

showing Luisa a mystical tree with branches full of flowers, fruits, pearls and precious stones, which symbolize the different virtues that a soul can possess. This tree also had three distinct roots symbolizing Faith, Hope and Charity. About these roots Jesus says:

Now, who has given life to such a beautiful tree? Certainly the roots. This means that Faith, Hope and Charity embrace everything and contain all virtues, so much so, that they are placed there as the basis and the foundation of the tree, and without them no other virtue can be produced. (Vol. 2: September 9, 1899)

These three supernatural virtues, infused at Baptism, enable the soul to know, desire and love God, acts which the soul cannot accomplish with her own natural powers. The Theology of Christian Perfection, an authoritative work on the subject of Christian perfection, explains:

...by these three [virtues] immediate union with God is realized perfectly. Faith enables us to know and unites us with God as First Truth; Hope makes us desire Him as the Supreme Good for us; Charity unites us to Him by the love of friendship, so far as He is infinite goodness in Himself. There are no other aspects of union with God... [5]

In Volume 1 of the Book of Heaven, Jesus gives a similar explanation:

Faith is lit in the soul at the first news it has about the Supreme Being. Then it grows and develops, by means of the perpetual ascension that the soul makes toward God, its greatest good; for which it acquires the intellectual light which boundlessly goes forth from each of the divine attributes toward his creature. Illuminated by such splendor of living Faith, which gives it the assurance it can obtain such a great good, who is God, this creature longs for Faith's object. Therefore, it investigates the most suitable way to win such a great prize. And filled with Hope, it crosses one mountain after another from morning till night, passing through every valley and the vastest plains. It travels over lakes and rivers; it navigates the high and open seas continuously for months and years, for the sole purpose of obtaining not only the favor of its God, but his possession as well. This operative longing of attaining the possession of God, united to the two sisters of Faith and Hope comes to be called Love.

Here it is, my beloved spouse: I have illustrated to you the Trinity of the divine Persons in the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity... ...My spouse, if Faith is light that serves as sight to the soul, Hope is the nourishment of Faith that gives energy and ardent longing to the soul to conquer those goods that Faith sees. Besides this, it gives courage to the soul to face bold adventures always with calmness of spirit and with perfect peace. It makes the soul persevering as it searches out every way and means that can give it success. Then, Charity is the substance from which the light and nourishment of Faith emerge, without which there could be neither Faith

nor Hope; just as, in a similar way, without fire there could be neither light nor heat. Charity, like a soothing ointment, spreads and penetrates everywhere, bringing to maturity the longings of Hope and the visions of Faith, since in the sweetness of its love Charity renders suffering soothing and sweet, even to making the soul eager to suffer (Vol. 1: Chapter 45).

In Volume 2, Jesus continues in this vein with these encouraging words:

If Faith is the king, Charity is queen, and Hope is like the peacemaking mother who pacifies everything. In fact, with Faith and Charity there may be disturbance, but Hope, being bond of peace, converts everything into peace. Hope is support, Hope is refreshment; and when the soul, rising by means of Faith, sees the beauty, the sanctity and the love with which she is loved by God, she feels drawn to love Him, but in seeing her insufficiency, how little she does for God, and how she should love Him but does not, she feels discomforted, disturbed and almost does not dare to draw near God — immediately this peacemaking mother comes out, and placing herself between Faith and Charity, she begins to perform her office of peacemaker. She makes the soul peaceful again, she pushes her, raises her, gives her new strengths; and carrying her before King Faith and Queen Charity, she excuses the soul, she places a new effusion of her merits before the soul, and she prays them to receive her. And Faith and Charity, with their gazes fixed only on this peacemaking mother, so tender and compassionate, receive the soul, and God forms the delight of the soul, and the soul the delight of God (Vol. 2: September 19, 1899).

The Ten Virtues Necessary to Maintain the Divine Attitude

The following ten virtues were pointed out (in Section No. 1 of this chapter) as the most important for acquiring the dispositions necessary for maintaining the divine attitude:

i. Obedience

ii. Abandonment (Resignation)

iii. Humility (Self-knowledge)

iv. Purity of Intention

v. Trust (Confidence) in God

vi. Mortification

vii. Detachment

viii. Interior Recollection (Continual Prayer)